

would create a modern public health infrastructure across our Nation designed to increase early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's. It would also focus on supporting the needs of caregivers who often bear the lasting impact of this disease.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to stand with Alzheimer's patients, with their families, and with their caregivers and support this important bill.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 3828

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 3828, the Patsy T. Mink Gender Equity in Education Act of 2017, a bill originally introduced by Representative Louise Slaughter of New York, for the purposes of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALMER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

THE "VACANT VA" IS AN INSULT TO OUR HEROES

(Ms. BROWNLEY of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am deeply concerned that the Department of Veterans Affairs is missing nearly a dozen key, very important leaders, which is a grave disservice to our Nation's veterans.

It has been 4 weeks since the President announced his latest VA Secretary nominee, but he has yet to formally submit the nomination to the Senate. The VA has been without a permanent Under Secretary for Health since February of 2017, and there are at least nine Deputy Under Secretaries and Assistant Deputy Secretary positions without a permanent appointee.

Without strong, steady leadership, how will the VA provide the best healthcare and timely benefits our Nation's veterans deserve?

The President must take responsibility for these failures of leadership and immediately prioritize identifying, properly vetting, and appointing the qualified leaders the VA needs because this "vacant VA" is an insult to our heroes.

WE NEED A FISCAL CONSERVATIVE IN CHARGE OF THE PENTAGON

(Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I know that one of the easiest

things in this world to do is to spend other people's money; and for at least 50 years or more, we have been reading and hearing about unbelievable waste by the Pentagon and excessive charges by defense contractors who hire so many retired admirals and generals.

But in today's American Conservative magazine, there is an article about Air Force spending that really takes the cake. The article is entitled: "Why Do Air Force Planes Need \$10,000 Toilet Seat Covers?" The story is by Dan Grazier, a former Marine captain. He wrote the following:

"... a Department of Defense contractor told the Air Force that each new toilet seat cover for the C-17 cargo plane will cost \$10,000. Will Roper, the Air Force's Chief Acquisition official, rather than pooh-poohing the cost, defended it by claiming the company would have to switch production from other products to make a limited number of toilet covers, thus driving up the expense."

It is unpatriotic, Mr. Speaker, for any Federal department, but especially the Defense Department, to spend taxpayers' money so recklessly. I wish someday—someday—we could get a fiscal conservative in charge at the Pentagon.

OFFSHORE DRILLING

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, House Republicans have taken their appalling assault on New Jersey to new lows: The Natural Resources Committee is considering legislation that would penalize States like New Jersey, where Governor Murphy and our people have had the courage and foresight to block drilling in State waters.

What House Republicans don't realize is that New Jerseyans will never be blackmailed into accepting drilling miles away from our \$38 billion-a-year tourism industry. We know the damage that the BP oil spill did to communities on the Gulf Coast, and we will stop at nothing to prevent it off New Jersey's waters.

The Trump administration offered the largest offshore drilling plan we have ever seen last year, but even the President understands the true dangers of drilling. We know this because he excluded drilling off Florida waters at the request of his political allies there.

Republicans understand the risk of offshore drilling, yet they are all too happy to subject coastal communities throughout our country to the risk.

So much, Mr. Speaker, for State rights.

Mr. Speaker, New Jerseyans have a long memory, and we will never forget this assault on our economy and our way of life.

OUR NATION'S OPIOID EPIDEMIC

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the work the House is doing to address the opioid epidemic sweeping our Nation.

Sadly, in 2016, our Nation lost more people to overdose deaths than were lost during the entire Vietnam war. One of those lives lost was Samantha Huntley, whose picture I have here.

Samantha was an outgoing cheerleader at Kickapoo High School in Springfield, Missouri. When she was 16, she was in a car wreck and broke her back. Her doctor prescribed opioids to deal with the pain, and when they ran out, Sam turned to heroin.

At age 18, she confessed to her mom she needed help, but she was never able to beat her addiction. Tragically, Sam succumbed to an overdose last year, at age 20.

This epidemic must not take any more of our young people. That is why we are passing over 70 bills this week to address this crisis. Now is the time to prevent other tragedies so beautiful, amazing youth like Samantha can live.

CRUELTY IN ITS PUREST FORM

(Mr. KENNEDY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, tonight children—2, 3, 4 years old—will sleep alone in cages on American soil.

Yes, the brutality being perpetrated by the United States Government is about who we are as a country. It is about morality. It is about humanity. But first, it is about those kids:

The 5-year-old boy from Honduras who collapsed on a kitchen floor in Michigan, sobbing for his parents;

The mother who had to listen to her 7-year-old daughter frantically screaming in a detention room next door as she was hauled away;

The 3-year-old boy who was put, inconsolable, on a flight to the Midwest after his mother was left behind;

A 4-month-old baby ripped from his father's arms.

I don't care what you believe. I don't care who you vote for or what you think about the nuances of immigration reform. These children—babies—need to be with their parents, just like every other child in this country. Anything less is cruelty in its purest form.

CONGRATULATING LIEUTENANT ERIC SCHRAGE

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lieutenant Eric Schrage of the Collinsville Fire Department and congratulate him on being awarded the Medal of Honor Award from the Firefighting Medal of Honor Awards Ceremony this past May.

Lieutenant Schrage was recognized for his actions in responding to a fire